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**RELIGIOUS MONITOR,**  
OR,  
**EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY.**



DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, AS SET  
FORTH IN THE FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER  
DIVINES, AND OF THE CHURCHES IN HOLLAND.

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**Original Communications.**

*For the Religious Monitor.*

ANIMADVERSIONS ON LETTERS ON CHRISTIAN COMMUNION.

*(Concluded from page 30.)*

THE foundation of the scheme of communion advocated in Dr. D's letters, having been found so deficient, we might be excused from noticing his answers to objections; for it is obvious, they can go no farther in removing these, than the foundation of his scheme will bear them out.

But, that we may consider the subject in every point of view, in which it has been placed, and more fully test the value of every argument brought to support it, we shall make a few remarks on these also. "The first objection" he allows, "is very plausibly urged, that we are not to be partakers of other men's sins, and if we sit down at the Lord's table with those whom in charity we judge good people, but whom we know to profess error, or practice some false worship, we become partakers with them in their error and false worship; for example, if we commune with a Baptist, we take part with him in all the errors of the Baptist church. I reply," he says, "that to the man who thinks so, it will be the case. But an erring conscience is a grievous snare." The substance of his reply is in the following passage. "If I join with a believer in professing the same faith in the Calvinistic doctrines, will this imply communion with him in Baptism, while I am unbaptized? and certainly, as little will my communion in the sacrament of the supper imply communion

with the individual, or congregation, who sit with me at the sacramental table, in erroneous doctrine, while I reject that doctrine, and profess the contrary. Communion let it be recollected, necessarily implies participation. Good men refuse to hear what they acknowledge to be the gospel. They refuse to partake in what they allow to be the Lord's supper dispensed to others, with a blessing which renders it the nourishment of eternal life to their souls, lest this communion in hearing, and in bread and wine, should make them guilty of error, or some false worship, which they professedly reject," p. 10, 11. If I am not much mistaken, his principle is, that unless we actually practice false worship, and actually believe erroneous doctrine, we cannot partake of the *sin* of them. If so, I might sit at the communion table with a Socinian on my one hand, and a Roman Catholic on my other. "Communion in bread and wine, will not make me guilty of their errors, while I professedly reject them." Our Fathers, had they been cautious, might have found some other way of exonerating their consciences than by *separating* from the church of Rome. Though they had communed in a Catholic chapel with the priest, that would not have made them guilty of the errors held by that church, while they did not profess, but reject them. And then, "Surely, surely the amount of evil which the church has realized since the era of the *Reformation*, and the variety of sects into which she has been divided, and the unforbearing, not to say hostile measures, which these sects have pursued to each other," which "have equalled all that *schism* could be expected to produce," would have been prevented.

If we admit the Doctor's principle to be sound, I do not see how we can be partakers in the guilt of Adam's first sin, nor how the justice of God is to be vindicated, in allowing the congregation of Israel to be smitten before the men of Ai, because of Achan's offence: nor, how Saul's posterity should be punished with death for his breaking the oath made to the Gibeonites, hundreds of years before.

It is also difficult to perceive the reason of John's severe prohibition to the Lady, in his second Epistle. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, (viz. the doctrine of Christ,) receive him not *into your house*, nor bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds," verse 10, 11. Surely, though she had sat with him at the communion table, much less, had she received him into her *house*, these things would not have made her guilty of these errors which she professedly rejected. Though she had bid him God speed, (a mere expression of good will,) how would that have made her a partaker of his evil deeds, if she herself carefully avoided *doing* the same things. The Doctor allows "civil and religious societies to be much the same in their object and end." Let us see how this principle would operate in the affairs of civil society. Suppose a number of men come into this country, avow-

edly hostile to the principles of republican government, and decidedly in favour of monarchy and despotism; would I indeed be free from blame in admitting them to a participation of the highest privileges and immunities, which a sound republican citizen can enjoy? would I be innocent, if I should submit to their claims of authority as officers in this country, merely because I have openly avowed myself to be a republican? Suppose farther, I should have reason to believe that it was their purpose, if possible, to overturn our republican institutions, to bring all they could over to befriend a monarchical system; in joining in their assemblies, and countenancing them, would I still be free from a share in their evil deeds, because I profess opposite sentiments? Is there not here the plainest inconsistency between profession and practice? Profess as I please, and theorise on the subject as I might, I would be very likely to receive the appellation of an enemy or a traitor to my country, by the common consent of Americans. The application is easy. If a Presbyterian, I mean one, who in reality, believes that Presbytery is the only form of church government laid down in the scriptures, goes and communes in an Episcopalian congregation, and receives the consecrated elements, at the hands of the Prelate, is not his practice at open war with his profession? How is it possible to reconcile them? He receives these elements at the hand of one, whom he avowedly and sincerely believes, has no authority from Christ to administer them, that is, from a usurper in the church of Christ; and *from* one, and *with* a great many whose open and professed design is hostile to the very existence of Presbytery.

If you say the conclusion is harsh, the only possible way to soften it, is to allow the Bishop authority, and then—what?—You soften it at the expense of absurdity, and charging it on the scriptures too—Episcopacy and Presbytery, two opposite systems, having authority from the same source! But the Bishop may be a real believer, and it would amount to the “identical evil of schism” to refuse him! We beg therefore, to be excused for considering this principle, both fallacious and dangerous.

The second objection to his scheme of fellowship, which he takes notice of, is, “if error or immorality is tolerated in a church, the whole church is answerable; and if the majority persevere in retaining the erroneous and scandalous, the minority must withdraw as well for their own exoneration, as to set up a pure church,” to which he answers, “certainly if error or immorality, is tolerated in the church at a *particular place*, the whole church at *that place* is responsible, On this subject there is no room for controversy. The only question is with regard to the measures, which a minority ought to adopt, for removing heresy or scandalous immorality, when the majority of the church, are unfaithful in tolerating them. It is foreign from the

object of these letters, to inquire fully on the subject of these measures, &c." p. 12.

To say nothing of the contradiction between "not being guilty of errors which we reject," and "the whole church being responsible for it,"—it is to be regretted, that the Doctor should thus flinch from the "*only question*," and hide himself again in a fog; because, had he come out here and shown himself, we might have been able to say, whether or not, he and we could agree on the *only question*. He is content, however, to put us off with a negative artfully constructed; viz. "But that a separate communion should be established, from which, not the heretical; and scandalous only, are excluded, but also members of other churches, in which the truth is professed, and the real worship of God maintained, though with less purity, this is utterly refused, and for this simple reason, that the measure is without a warrant in the word of God." *ibid*.

So then, we must not separate from a church, while it can be said, that she holds the truth and maintains real worship, if she should hold along with it the doctrines of Devils, and have her skirts defiled with all the spiritual whoredoms that ever disgraced the church at any time. That the reader may see we do not strain his words, let him attend to the passage which immediately follows:

"Error and heresy, and scandal of every kind, existed at different times, in the Old Testament church, as much as in the New; yet it will not be alledged by any, that dividing and setting up *separate communions*, to the exclusion of any of the true worshippers of the God of Israel, was ever enjoined as the remedy for these evils. God's church under the law was one, and was *not on any account to be divided*; and beyond all controversy, she is as much one under the gospel. It may be safely affirmed, that there is not such an idea to be found in the whole New Testament, two separate churches, recognized by the head of the church, in their separate capacity excluding each other's members from their fellowship in worship. Among all the duties which Christ has enjoined on his followers, where do we find any thing like, *divide from one another*?" *ibid*. How this is to be reconciled with his concession in the same page, viz:—"That *cases may occur*, which will warrant a separation, and the organization of a distinct worshipping assembly, in which the *whole truth, to the last item*, if possible, shall be publicly professed, and every thing scandalous in practice discountenanced, is not denied," or how the PRINCIPLE upon which this "distinct worshipping assembly," is bound to "profess publicly the *whole truth to the last item* and to discountenance every thing scandalous—is to be reconciled with the PRINCIPLE, which "renders it altogether unwarrantable to separate from them, who may very blameably suffer themselves to be mingled with the erroneous and corrupt; who may be themselves the *victims* of error and mistake; and



who may be, in many things, greatly wanting in their duty," p. 13, is for the Doctor, or some one espousing his scheme, to show.

But, the "church of God under the law was one, and was on *no account to be divided*; and beyond all controversy she is as much one, under the gospel." Here then we are closely shut up; there is now, no escape. Either we must go back into the church of Rome, casting creeds and confessions to the moles and the bats, confessing that we have greatly sinned in ever having left her communion, if peradventure we may obtain absolution; or, be guilty of persevering in a measure without warrant from the word of God." It is true she is full of abominations, and is the mother of harlots, and God has threatened her with eternal desolation. Yet she holds the truth—the Trinity in unity—Christ to be God and man—His sufferings to be vicarious, &c. and the church is on no account to be divided. "There is no such idea to be found in the New Testament."

That "errors and immorality are not to be tolerated, is granted as a point that cannot be controverted;" and the minority "may endeavour to instruct them, warn them, oppose them face to face in those things wherein they are to be blamed, nay, write against their errors and publicly profess our opposition thereto, &c. But to separate from them, as we separate from the world lying in wickedness—This is altogether unwarrantable," p. 13. That is, we must profess to be *one with them*, as we do at the communion table, and again, that we are *different from them*, as we do when we profess to oppose them face to face. This approaches so very near to absurdity, that I know not how to tell the difference.

Suppose however that all these measures are faithfully used by the minority to remove heresy and scandalous immorality without effect; which has been the case ever since there was a church of God in the world; what is next to be done? When it shall please the Doctor to take up his pen and enter fully into the *only* question, we beg that he will tell us how, these measures failing, the evil is to be removed. For he grants that it must be removed, and that the majority are unfaithful in tolerating it.

The third objection which he notices is, that in the case of the erroneous, and of those who fall from their duty, we are expressly required to exclude them from our fellowship, as a means of their recovery. In his answer to this, he seems rather to loose courage, and needs a long preface that he may have time to draw his breath. There are a number of texts on which the objection rests, especially, Math. xviii. 15—17, to which he has paid no attention. The reason is best known to himself.

The two he mentions are the following: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition you received from us. And, if any

man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed, yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother," 2 Thess. 2. 3—14. "Both these," he says "respect cases of very flagrant offences"—As to the first, he is careful to confine it to those, "Who, working not at all are busy bodies"—"And it will surely be conceded at once, that persons given up to idleness, and officious meddling in other people's concerns, (which seems to be the meaning of busy bodies,) cannot be Christians." p. 17.

This, is surely rating the offence sufficiently high, to warrant *withdrawing*. If it did not however, it would ruin the whole scheme. But we are hardly willing to concede that this is a judgment of charity, and he with some reluctance, gives it back to us in the next sentence. "Christians, it is true, may fall into this sin, as they may fall into sin, &c." *Ibid*.

So they may, and then with apostolic approbation we may withdraw from those whom we may believe in *charity*, to be real Christians; and then, what becomes of the Doctor's scheme of having all real believers into church fellowship? He replies, "While they continue in this disorderly conduct, their credible profession is destroyed." *Ibid*.

But it is not so destroyed, that *charity* cannot still gather evidence from it, sufficiently strong to warrant the judgment that they are *Christians*, and this is all he has ever sought from it.

"This," he says, "I conceive is exactly the doctrine plead in the preceding letter, that all who believe, are by Christ himself, *without exception*, vested with the right of sonship in his family, &c." After all, he is obliged to allow, that it is a duty to withdraw from those believers in Christ, who fall into the sin of idleness and officious meddling. So then a credible profession, as *estimated by charity* must be given up.

But we cannot agree with the Doctor in his interpretation of the "erring brother that walketh disorderly," because he confines a general rule to the particular case which gave occasion to it. Common sense may tell any man, that unless *idleness and officious meddling* can be made out to be the *only* kind of disorderly walking of which a brother can be guilty, the rule must have a more extensive application. If the application of the general principles of the Bible, were to be limited to those particular cases which gave occasion to them, the rule of moral conduct would be defective indeed, "and the man of God would not be fully furnished by it unto every good word and work."

"The second case," he says, "is equally flagrant, ver. 14. 'If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed.' Surely, this is a very flagrant offence—refusing to obey apostolic authority. A man while he continues in this course, certainly withholds satisfactory evidence of the genuineness of his chris-

tianity, and until he gives evidence of his repentance, ought not to enjoy the fellowship of true Christians." p. 18.

We are perfectly willing to take this offence at his estimation; and, which must be truly gratifying to the Doctor, we are willing to subscribe to the above, as terms of communion.

Obedience to *apostolic authority* is all we plead for; all who obey it we wish to have in our communion, and to cast out all who will not, until they give evidence of their repentance.—Presbyterian church government has the authority of the Apostles, and which is not less, of Christ himself. The Doctor will admit this. The Confession of Faith which he has subscribed teaches this, and his practice says he believes it. "Obey them that have the rule over you," is an apostolic command frequently given, requiring the obedience of all Christ's sheep, to the authority of Presbytery. What then are we to do, when professing Christians in vast numbers, declare that they will not?—that Presbytery is not warranted in the word of God, and that its ordination is no ordination?

There can be only one alternative in the case, either they must be refused admission, or he must virtually deny that Presbytery has apostolic authority. For I take it for granted, that what would justly exclude a man from the fellowship of the church, should also keep him excluded, while he continues to persevere in the same course.

But the *whole doctrine* which the Apostles taught, is delivered with *authority*, and when their doctrines are rightly believed, it is the *obedience* of faith. And therefore, when a man, or any number of men shall deny, in other words refuse the obedience of faith to any thing taught by the Apostles, do they not refuse to obey "*apostolic authority*," and therefore, become unworthy of the fellowship of true Christians? Suppose some come forward, who expressly deny the absolute sovereignty of God in Election, a doctrine so clearly taught in the 9th chapter of Romans; do they not "*refuse obedience to apostolic authority*?" Assuredly they do, and both the Doctor and the Apostle, agree as to the step proper to be taken in the case.

"Now brethren," says the Apostle at the end of an epistle, containing all the peculiar doctrines of our Confession of Faith, "I beseech you, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which *ye have* learned, and avoid them," Rom. xvi. 17. Can such persons be *avoided*, and at the same time admitted to the *closest bonds of Christian fellowship*?

"Surely," the Doctor "is not one of those who deem any truth of Revelation unimportant, he is not for dropping 'a hair or hoof of truth.' That which the great God hath thought of sufficient moment for him to reveal, or command, we may not think of too little value to hold fast, both in our own profession and practice. p. 22. And we know he would not hesitate for a

moment to admit, that God *commands* us to believe whatever he has revealed to us.

The points at issue then, between the Doctor and us, are at last brought within a small compass. They are all embraced in the answer to the following question. Do we contend for any thing to be a term of fellowship, either in doctrine, worship, government or discipline, which is not taught in the word of God? If we do not, then it follows, that in requiring of persons seeking admission into fellowship with us, an approbation of these terms, and adherence to them; we require them to obey only what has the authority of the Apostles—the authority of God; and if we refuse them fellowship because they do not approve of these terms, it is only because they “refuse to obey apostolic authority,” which is “a flagrant offence.”

But if we *do* contend for *any one* thing, either in doctrine, worship, or government, which is *not* taught in the word; in retaining that one thing we are to blame, surely; but we cannot be reasonably expected to relinquish it until it be pointed out to us.

The very first thing therefore, which the Doctor ought, upon his own principles to do before he finds fault with our terms of fellowship, is, to point it out to us, and use at least *some* pains to convince us that that thing really has not a foundation in the scriptures.

Concerning the Westminster Confession, the Doctor speaks thus, “To these excellent formularies, (without admitting them to be more than human authority, founded on the word of God,) I fearlessly appeal, as to the fellowship which all saints by profession are bound to maintain with each other,” &c. p. 28. To say nothing of the ambiguous reserve contained in the parenthesis, this much is granted, that these “excellent formularies are founded on the word of God. This is enough. Whatever the authority of these formularies be, they are, by this admission so connected with the word that the rejection of them, as certainly *infers* the rejection of that in the word, on which they are founded, as they themselves are *inferrable* from it. It does by no means follow, that because a proposition has *only* human authority, it can be denied without disobedience to apostolic authority.

A man's child ought to obey his lawful commands, is a proposition having only human authority; will he say that its negative can be asserted without implicitly contradicting the words of the Apostle? Christ upbraided the disciples for their unbelief, although the event of his resurrection had been announced to them by uninspired women.

If disbelieving a truth fairly deduced from the word, and clothed in human language, be not paramount to disobedience to the word itself on which it is founded, then it is of little consequence whether we preach, or the people hear, any thing else



than the *ipsissima verba*, the very expressions and the very arrangement of the word of God itself; because in any other way, their believing would not amount to the obedience of Faith.—Nay, the same principle would reduce us to the necessity of reading the Hebrew of the Old, and the Greek of the New Testament.

I shall notice only one thing more, viz. the sense in which he frequently uses the term "withdraw," as applied to the churches he addresses. It is still taken for granted, that because we do not admit all Christians to our communion table, that we have *withdrawn* from them. I do not understand this—how we can be said, with any propriety of language, to have withdrawn from those societies with which we never were *united*. One would often be tempted to think that he himself had been "withdrawn" from, by these churches to which his letter is addressed, and that he was left to occupy the original ground on which they formerly stood with him. But, if the case be quite the reverse, I think Lexicographers ought to be acquainted with this new application of the term *withdraw*, otherwise, it will be very frequently misunderstood.

In conclusion, allow me to say, that while I have willingly deduced no consequences from the sentiments asserted in this letter, but what appear to me to be justly warranted by them, I do not mean to say, that he holds all these consequences, or ought to be charged with any, which he rejects. That he is a good man and a Christian, and sincerely desires to promote the good of the visible church, and the glory of God thereby, I readily believe. And if any thing improper has escaped me, I trust it will not be imputed to any evil intention. G.



#### HOPKINSIAN ERRORS.

The following is from Dr. Ely's Theological Review. No author has studied this thorny controversy more, or is better acquainted with the subject than the celebrated author of the Review, and to none are the Religious public under greater obligations for the able and spirited defence of the doctrines of the Reformation, which his writings furnish. On this subject his contrast is a work of standard merit. We give the following extract, to show what this much talked of, and extensively prevailing system of error is; and have only to add farther, that it only contains a summary of its dogmas, the ramifications of which are endless, affecting the whole system of divine truth.

"It is frequently asked, what is *Hopkinsian error*? If any would be informed, we refer them to the article of *Calvinism* in

Miss Hannah Adams' last edition of her *View, or Dictionary of Religions*, which presents several of the prominent points of difference between Calvinists, and those whom she denominates *Hopkinsian Calvinists*. We shall venture to give a brief sketch of a pretty thorough Hopkinsian. He denies the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. He believes in the total depravity of man's will, through the immediate agency of God; but not in the *universal* depravity of all his mental and bodily faculties. He believes in common with the Arminians, that Christ made an atonement equally for all men of the human race, so that now, God can pardon every sinner, or no sinner, without any impeachment of his justice; but the atonement brings him under no covenant engagement to save any. He believes, however, in a particular redemption, through sanctification, of all the subjects of the particular election. He deems *the heart* and *the will* synonymous, and thinks a sinner loves God by an act of the will. He affirms, that all holiness consists in disinterested love, and all sin in *self love*, which he identifies with *selfishness*; and that neither holiness nor sin is predicable of any thing but the acts of the will. He believes that God is the efficient cause of every act of man's will, as much, and as strictly of his unholy, as of his holy volitions; and yet, that fallen man has *natural ability* to do all that God requires. Regeneration, he deems an instantaneous, irresistible act of God, not performed in consequence of any covenant engagement about the atonement, but from mere sovereignty, by which God efficiently causes the first morally right operation of a sinner's will. Regeneration, he thinks, changes a man's will, and is effected, not through any instrumental agency, by which God may be pleased to act, but through the physical energy of God's operation on that faculty, without any means of grace. He believes the *benefit* of Christ's righteousness is enjoyed by the believer, but denies that *the righteousness itself* is *imputed* to him. After an elected person is regenerated, his moral actions, (that is, his acts of the will,) are either perfectly holy or perfectly sinful; and these continually alternate in his exercise; the holy, upon the whole, becoming more frequent, until he finishes his course on earth. All the Christian graces are reducible to love; and that modification of love which is called repentance precedes that which is called faith, in every renewed person. These are some of the peculiar tenets of a Hopkinsian; and while we wish grace, mercy and peace, to all who hold them, we nevertheless again wish, confusion to their errors."

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For the Religious Monitor.

#### REVIEW

*Of Mr. Beman's four sermons on the Doctrine of the Atonement.*

THE Gospel of Christ is indeed good tidings of great joy, unto all people. The atonement for sin which it reveals and calls

men to embrace, constitutes its peculiar excellence. This was the grand desideratum in natural religion: Reason and conscience attested to men their guilt, and the justice of Deity, and fear of punishment impelled them to make the most costly sacrifices, and to submit to the severest penances to appease the anger of God, and to procure the divine favour. Anxiously did they ask, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" And after all their services and sacrifices, a consciousness of guilt remained, and fear of punishment haunted them. But what man could neither devise nor execute has been effected by Jehovah. He hath said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."—"He hath set forth Christ, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The atonement is fully and perspicuously developed in the holy scriptures, and amply recognized and illustrated, in the standards of the church at the Reformation, and in the works of divines published at that period. *Correct apprehensions of its nature, necessity and consequences*, are still of primary importance to every man, and especially to every preacher of the Gospel. Of late years, it has attracted an unusual share of attention, on account of its total rejection by some, and the novel views given of it by others. Mr. Beman informs us, that he has been induced to compose, preach, and publish four sermons on the atonement, to call the attention of men to this topic, in a region where it has attracted little notice. The goodness of his intentions, is far less questionable than the tendency of his work. We will not affirm that the gospel he advocates is another gospel than the gospel of Christ, but it is unquestionably in many important articles, the very reverse of those doctrines, which, as a minister of the Presbyterian church, he solemnly pledged himself to God and man at his ordination, to believe, maintain and publish. Ere we close, we will furnish an easy method of testing the correctness of this assertion.

The *necessity*, the *nature*, and the *extent* of the atonement, are the topics discussed by the preacher. He seems to have taken it for granted, that his hearers and readers were already acquainted with the nature of the atonement, else he would certainly have placed the two sermons on that part of the subject before the one of its necessity. This collocation however, is not much to be regretted, as every reader is likely to rise from the perusal of the whole, asking himself, "What is the atonement." The preacher will tell him very distinctly what he thinks it is not, but will not inform him what it is. The reader must be endued with quick

perception if he discerns any connection between the atonement advocated in these sermons and the person of Christ Jesus—any excellence it derives from his humanity or deity, or from both united—any relation it bears to the sin of men, different from what it bears to the sin of Devils, or whether obedience to the precepts of the law, as well as suffering its penalty, enters as an essential ingredient into it.

The *necessity* of the atonement is the subject handled in the first discourse. While the necessity of the atonement is generally acknowledged, very different grounds of this necessity are assigned. Some derive it from the nature of God, some from his law, and some from expediency. Those that embrace the former, assert that it is as impossible for God to pardon a sinner, and admit him to his favour, without inflicting the full penalty denounced against his transgression, as it is to deny himself, or to cease to be. While they acknowledge him to be naturally and necessarily merciful and gracious, they suppose, not only that he *will* not, but that he *cannot* dispense with the condign punishment of sin. They suppose that it is just as necessary for God, and as independent of his will to hate and punish sin as to delight in, and reward righteousness. It is not a blind, a fatal necessity for which they plead, as of burning in the fire; but, what flows from, and is regulated by his justice, holiness and wisdom. They do not pretend that God was under any natural obligation to save sinners, but that, on the supposition of his purpose to save them, he could not do it without satisfaction being made to the most rigid demands of justice, any more than he can act unjustly. They suppose, while the mode, and the circumstances of punishment, are regulated by the will and the wisdom of God, and also the infliction of the punishment on the transgressor himself, or his substitute, that God cannot, by any act of his will or sovereignty dispense with punishment itself. This is the sentiment of almost all approved theological writers.

Some seem to refer the necessity of the atonement exclusively to the law of God. In it he has denounced death against transgression, and this denunciation must be inflicted, or he would stand convicted of perjury. If the precept and the penalty of the law be regarded as immutable, this opinion, in its practical results coincides with the former. For on either supposition, the guilty sinner continuing in sin cannot promise himself impunity.

They that found the necessity of the atonement in expediency, suppose, that although God was under no obligations from either his nature or law to insist on the punishment of sin, as an indispensable prerequisite to granting pardon to the guilty, that there are sundry weighty considerations, rendering this an expedient and desirable measure. They deem it an excellent plan worthy of God and eminently calculated to promote the happiness of the Universe, but that nevertheless; he might have



adopted other measures and set this aside altogether. It is difficult to say, which of these three sentiments is maintained by Mr. B. Here, as on many other subjects, there is a dangling laxity, an indefiniteness in his expressions, puzzling conjecture itself. Sometimes he speaks in such lofty and correct language of the penalty of the law being like, "the arm of the Lord inflexible, holy, just and good, yea, infinitely excellent," that we are tempted to think that he founds the necessity of the atonement in the law, but anon he tells us, that the penalty is suspended, set aside, and, in strict propriety, never inflicted. On the whole, he seems inclined to expediency. "We conceive that God was as much inclined to have mercy upon our world, without an atonement as with it, provided at the same time, it could be done with equal *propriety* and *safety*." "This atonement was required, that God might be just, that is, that he might do the thing which was fit and proper, and best and most expedient to be done." If this be the author's real sentiment, he stands on a pinnacle instead of the adamant rock, and if ever called to defend the atonement against those that deny it altogether, he will be glad to shift his ground.

Mr. B. begins the enumeration of the measures for the necessity of the atonement by observing, "That it was not necessary to incline God the Father to the exercise of mercy." To this sentiment which he seems to regard with horror little inferior to what he feels at the full endurance of the penalty of the law by Christ, he adverts thrice, and each time inveighs, for pages, against it. He seems to have met with many, who imagine that there is no natural inclination to mercy in Jehovah, and that it is superinduced by the atonement of Christ. Surely if there be any such in our northern regions, they must be ignorant indeed, and there is reason to fear, that our preachers criminally withhold from them, the knowledge of some of the very first principles of the oracles of God. Some may have an undefined apprehension of this kind, but it has not been our lot to meet with a single professor of religion, so ignorant of his Bible, as to imagine that the atonement inclined the Father to mercy, and never saw the notion but once, transiently and negligently asserted in a respectable writer.

Those that found the necessity of the atonement in the nature of God, assign as its reasons, Gods moral attributes, as his holiness, justice, wisdom and goodness—the sufferings and death of Christ, God's beloved son—the history of God's moral government in every age—the testimony of the scriptures;—no writer that founds the necessity of the atonement in expediency, can employ these conclusive arguments in its defence. Lower and more debateable ground must be occupied. Accordingly Mr. B. contents himself with adducing the following maugre reasons for the necessity of the atonement, for which he pleads. That the atonement was necessary, as an expression of God's regard for the

moral law—to evince the divine determination to punish sin—and the relations of this doctrine with the rational universe." "A thinking and logical mind," would probably have regarded the first and second of these arguments as one, and the same, and reduced them to one. For the purpose of the law giver to punish sin, is annexed to the law as an expression of his regard for the law. The grand reason with him however, seems to be that this mode of saving sinners, would shut the mouths of all from complaining against him, and in particular, would quash the murmuring of the miserable inhabitants of Tophet. To the author and to all who found the necessity of the atonement in expediency, we would recommend Stevenson's Dissertations on the atonement, a work, replete with sound scriptural theology and the republication of which would be a blessing to the churches in America.

The *Nature* of the atonement constitutes the topic discussed in the second and third sermons. In strict propriety the term atonement denotes the effect of the expiatory and propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ in respect of God, as averting from us his Judicial anger, and opening a way for our restoration to his favour. It is expiatory, as it cancels our guilt, the cause of God's anger as Judge and law giver; propitiatory, as it is the means of gracious access to him, and favourable acceptance with him.—"He is our peace." "Through him we have access unto the Father." "By himself he purged our sins." "He suffered the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God." It covers the guilt of sin from the eye of God and us from his penal anger. It removes sin, the legal obstruction preventing the grace, mercy and love in the heart of God as a sovereign and father towards his own, from enriching them with the fulness of blessedness. As a gracious sovereign, these he loved with an everlasting love, but as law giver and governor, could not maintain communion with them, till his law was magnified and made honourable, and his justice satisfied by the vicarious righteousness of their surety.—As this atonement was made by Christ's becoming obedient, even unto the death of the Cross, his sufferings and the atonement are used as terms of the same import by writers on Divinity.

Mr. B. justly asserts, that correct views of the nature of the atonement, are all important, especially as they bear on its extent. In fact they give a tinge to the whole system of theology. This justified him in devoting two sermons to the discussion of it.—The prevailing views, on the nature of the atonement, he reduces to two. The one, and the one which the preacher himself subscribed at his ordination, he thus defines. "One opinion supposes the Redeemer to be in a strict and literal sense the representative of the Elect, and to have suffered for them, as their substitute, the penalty of the law; and those for whom he thus suffered are on legal principles eventually liberated from the curse, and restored to the favour of God." p. 30, 31. In this

scheme, there are four cardinal articles, and they are almost overlooked, or noticed only to be flatly contradicted by Mr. B. 1. That God the Father as supreme guardian and interpreter of his own law, appointed the atonement, and that Christ voluntarily engaged to offer himself a sacrifice and offering unto God. 2. That Christ substituted himself in the room of all his people, assuming their guilt, and becoming legally bound to expiate it.— This doctrine of substitution, thus understood, although abominated by Mr. B. and characterized as absurd and impossible, is the very marrow of the gospel, and so plainly recognized in all sacrifices in all ages and nations, that he is defied to produce a single instance to the contrary, either from the Bible or from any profane author. What else than substitution, and transfer of guilt was intended, on the great day of atonement, by the high priest's "laying both his hands on the head of the Goat and confessing over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the Goat?" Lev. xvi. 21. And was not the same done in substance in Christ, which was here done in figures? In fact if there was not "real substitution," it is hardly questionable whether Christ made a proper atonement. An atonement, without transfer of guilt, may satisfy some, but it will not quiet the enlightened and guilty inquirer. 3. That as the substitute of his people Christ died the *very death* awarded in the law as due to their transgressions. 4. That his vicarious death, from its obedi- ential nature and the dignity of his person, was of infinite value, and so a more glorious demonstration of the holiness and justice of God, than the personal and eternal punishment of the whole human race would have been. Against this view of the atonement Mr. B. earnestly protests, (how consistently, others will judge,) and assigns four reasons for his protest.

The first reason of his protest, is, that "this idea of the atonement would involve a transfer of characters, which is inconsistent with the principles of reason and scripture. Those who contend that Christ literally suffered the penalty of the law in the room of his people, have contrived a kind of commutation of moral character between Christ and those for whom he died. In this system, Christ is the legal substitute of the elect, and their sins are so imputed to him, that Christ becomes liable to the penalty of the law, and those for whom he suffered are in due time necessarily and legally exempted from the curse. To this construction of substitution and imputation, we do enter our entire and unqualified dissent. But Christ and man cannot exchange characters, because sin and holiness are personal, and cannot be transferred from one moral being to another." p. 33-35. On reading these extracts, one is tempted to suspect that they were written at a late hour, when balmy slumbers were secretly stealing on the preacher, and that his pen wrote *moral character* for *legal*, and *sin and holiness*, for *guilt and righteousness*. We know that

it is an old trick among divines, to impute to one another, sentiments, abhorred by those to whom they were imputed. A Bishop in England lately published an octavo volume, entitled, "A refutation of Calvinism," and the candid Dr. Scott affirms, that it contains not one statement of Calvinism, which a sound Calvinist holds. It is a curious and an important question, whether such statements are the result of sheer ignorance, or malice.—Most assuredly, our author did not derive this transfer of moral character, of which he speaks, and by which Christ ceased to be holy and the sinner became innocent, from the friends of the system which he opposes. We presume he cannot from among them all, produce a single individual, advancing such a blasphemous idea as he imputes to them. He may find such views imputed to them by Priestly, and other enemies of a scriptural atonement, but they reject them with abhorrence, and regard those that charge them with them, either as wilfully ignorant, or guilty of a breach of the ninth commandment. They do aver, that Christ did so assume the sins of his people, that he became legally obligated to endure the whole penalty which the law denounced against them, and that his righteousness is imputed to them. Their guilt, or liability to punishment, is transferred to Christ, and in justification, his righteousness is imputed to them. The transfer is of a legal, and not of a moral nature; and the thing transferred is not vice and holiness, but guilt and righteousness. But to be guilty, i. e. obnoxious to punishment, is very different from being a polluted unholy criminal. Christ became the former, but not the latter, and all the saints on earth are in the latter condition, but delivered from the former.—They are polluted in heart and life, and yet, liable to no condemnation; and Christ was condemned, justly condemned, actually made a curse, and at the same time, was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

The preacher avers, with all the confidence of one that had stood in the counsels of the Most High, and knows all that God can, or cannot do, that there can be no legal substitute for the sinner, that the thing is for ever impossible, unscriptural and absurd.—"It is for ever impossible in the very nature of things, that Christ should become liable to suffer that punishment which the law denounced against the transgressor and against him alone—the idea that Christ so took the legal place of the sinner, and that the iniquities of his people were so imputed to him, that the law required his death, and justice demanded the release of those for whom he expired, appears to us unscriptural and absurd," p. 34. To these bold, and we hesitate not to add, heretical assertions, it may suffice to oppose an authority superior to all exceptions.—The gospel is God's own commentary on his law. Perhaps we could neither have discovered, nor proved, that the law admitted of a substitute, but the gospel is a practical demonstration of it. Here we are assured that the Lord made to meet on Christ the



iniquity of us all, that he was made sin for us—made a curse for us, to deliver us from the curse of the law. He is expressly denominated the *surety*. In this sense holy men of God have understood the substitution of Christ. He was the consolation of their hearts, but it seems they were deceiving themselves. If we believe Mr. B. "the thing is forever impossible, unscriptural, and absurd."

Punishment by substitution, we admit, is as really a deviation from the ordinary course of justice, as a miracle is a deviation from the established laws of nature, but this evinceth it neither to be impossible, unscriptural or absurd. Miracles have been wrought when they more effectually promoted the divine glory, than adherence to established order would; and why should not vicarious punishment be inflicted, provided it more effectually illustrates the divine glory, than the personal punishment of the transgressor would? The supreme end of punishment is the vindication of the glory of God; and the inferior, the benefit of moral agents. And assuredly both of these ends are pre-eminently promoted by the vicarious punishment of Christ. It moreover opens new sources of happiness to the rational creation, and does injury to none. It does no injury to God, Father, Son or Spirit, and it damages no righteous subject of God.—And if such be its character and tendency, where is its impossibility, unscripturality and absurdity? or rather, is it not an illustrious, an unparalleled exhibition of the wisdom, holiness, mercy and justice of Jehovah?

The second reason of protest adduced by the preacher against the doctrine of the full punishment of the sins of the elect, being inflicted on their surety, a doctrine fully taught in the standards publicly approved of by him, is thus expressed: "That idea of the atonement, which supposes that Christ literally suffered the penalty of the law for those who shall finally be saved, destroys all mercy in God the Father. According to this scheme, the eternal Father as the guardian of the law and the governor of the universe, it would seem, has no pity for sinners, and no disposition to save them, aside from the atonement—this is a vital principle of that scheme against which we contend, to represent the father as rigidly insisting upon the whole penalty of the law before he consents to the offer of salvation to a rebellious world. Every particle of this curse must be inflicted. Every jot and title of the law be executed." p. 36, 37. The doctrine itself which Mr. B. condemns, is explicitly taught in the articles of his own church, and in the writings of those who composed these articles; but one and all of them, and so far as we know, all their successors, unite in rejecting the particular tenet charged on them.—If any of them have ever taught that the Son was more inclined than the Father to pity, and to save sinners, or that the inclination to mercy in the heart of God, is the effect of the atonement, we would gladly learn their names, and cordially unite in the

condemnation of the tenet imputed to them. The tenet imputed to them, may be a legitimate inference from their system, an inference, unperceived by them in their simplicity, but distinctly discerned by Mr. B. who may have studied all the niceties of logic. They distinguished between the character of God as a governor, and as a gracious sovereign and relenting parent.—Viewed in the latter character they deemed him inclined from the benevolence of his heart to pity and save them, but that as guardian of the law, he was judicially angry with them, and could not hold fellowship with them, till every iota of the demand of the law was fulfilled. Our preacher however, seems really unhappy, lest any poor saint should apprehend that the penalty of the law is removed, and would still suspend it over him. Perhaps however, the most of believers will live as comfortably and as gratefully and as obediently, cherishing the conviction that Christ exhausted the curse of the law, as if they believed that it was only set aside and suspended. For what is set aside may return, what is only suspended may fall with destructive ruin, but what is exhausted can never prove injurious.

The third reason of protest, is thus stated, "That if Christ literally endured the penalty of the law in the room of his people, then there is no grace in the restoration to the favour of God." To the extended declamation in support of this supposed objection against the plenary and vicarious satisfaction of Christ, the merest tyro, who holds the doctrine it is adduced to invalidate, would reply, "that the salvation of the elect as it respected Jesus Christ, is a matter of strict justice, secured by covenant compact between him and the Father; that it is actually a matter of justice as really as his own exaltation, but as it respects them, it is an act of pure grace; equally manifesting the grace of the Father in providing and admitting a surety, the grace of the Son in undertaking to be the surety of the church, and the grace of the spirit in applying the purchased redemption." We cannot help thinking that the preacher, instead of impugning the Doctrine of Christ's legal substitution by the argument here employed, would have consulted his own consistency full as much, if he had studied the answer in his own standards to the question, "How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?" He would answer that on the supposition of Christ's fully satisfying the justice of God, grace in the restoration of sinners is destroyed.—*The compilers of the Catechism* answer it thus—"The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by him," &c. Mr. B. knows that a plenary satisfaction is the vital principle in the system of which this answer is a part. It is certainly strange and perplexing to find a Presbyterian minister, a few months after his public approbation of the Confession, preaching and publishing that a plenary satisfaction destroys all grace in a sinners restoration to the divine favour. A blunt man who

speaks as he thinks, and calls actions by their right names, would be apt to call such conduct perjury.

The fourth reason of protest is, that "on the principle of a legal substitution, and a literal infliction of the penalty of the law, atonement would bring no accession of happiness to the universe. This view of the atonement annihilates every particle of benevolence in the gospel." This is a bold assertion, but, is it a true and genuine deduction from the view of the atonement condemned by the preacher? It is possible that this may be a genuine inference from the scheme of a plenary atonement, but its friends perceive it not, they disavow it. Is not Christ as happy and as glorious now, and will be to all eternity, as though he had never been a curse? Yea, are not his penal sufferings the very ground of his being crowned with glory and honour? Will not his penal and vicarious sufferings result in the eternal happiness of a number, which no man can number, and who, otherwise, would have been consigned to the punishment of hell? Is not the felicity of angels themselves enhanced by this transaction, opening to them new views, new services and new pleasures? And pray, has it damaged any, except the enemies of Jehovah? If so, must not the charge of annihilating the benevolence of the gospel, imputed to this scheme of the atonement be groundless?

Besides, we are at a loss to perceive in what respect the atonement plead for by the preacher, according to which the penalty of the law is not inflicted, exceeds in benevolence or brings a greater accession of happiness to the universe, than the one which he opposes, and, according to which, the penalty of the law is fully endured even to extinction. The quantity and the duration of the sufferings of Christ on both schemes, are precisely the same. In both schemes the same persons, and precisely the same number of them, will be saved with the same salvation. The sufferings then, that constitute the atonement plead for by Mr. B. and his opponents are the same, and the same number of persons are saved, according to both schemes. The sole difference between these schemes, arises, from the nature, kind, or effects of the sufferings, which Christ endured.—According to Mr. Beman, these were not penal, they did not cancel the penalty of the law, but only suspended that penalty, and demonstrated that God was angry with him.—They inferred no obligation on God, to save those for whom they were endured. According to his opponents, the sufferings of Christ from his cradle to his grave, were all penal, embracing the whole penal sentence of the law, and therefore, satisfied every claim of justice, for satisfaction from those for whom Christ died. They also, rendered the salvation of the elect necessary. In the one scheme, justice and mercy reign, in the other, mercy reigns, but justice is set a side. In the one scheme it is optional with God after the atonement is made, to save all or none, in the other, God is bound by covenant compact, to



save all for whom Christ suffered. These, then, are all the reasons of protest adduced by the preacher, against the legal substitution of Christ, in the room of his people, and the infliction upon him of the whole amount of the punishment of their sins. The two first, are utterly disavowed by the friends of this ~~system~~tem, and the charging the same upon them, is the result of ignorance or calumny itself. The third is in direct opposition to his own articles, as a minister of the Presbyterian church, and not the shadow of an argument, but what arises from confounding what is due to Christ the surety, and to those he represented. The salvation of the sinner is as legally due to Christ, who fulfilled, as surety, the condition of the covenant of grace, as his own exaltation. "He shall see his seed." To the guilty sinner himself, salvation is a free gift. "By grace ye are saved." The fourth reason of protest,—But for the sake of variety we will transcribe for you, the reason itself, and the preacher's illustration of it, and also, another illustration of the same topic, by a stanch defender of the atonement, as the full endurance of the whole penalty of the law, and recommend to you to publish both under the following designation:—

THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD DISPLAYED, AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE UNIVERSE AUGMENTED BY THE ATONEMENT.

**MESSRS EDITORS**—The *Atonement*, according to the standards of the Reformation churches, expiated the penal anger of Jehovah against his people, and opened up for them a way of access to his favour. The legal substitution of Christ their surety in their stead, the actual transfer of their guilt to him, and his suffering the whole amount of punishment denounced against it, are the vital principles in the system of religion founded on this view of the atonement. But a new view of the atonement, has pervaded not only almost all the churches in New-England, but also prevails extensively in the Presbyterian and Dutch churches in America, and has been broached and connected with various other tenets, forming an almost new system of Divinity. A leading principle in this new system is, that "the atonement of Christ, is not the endurance of the penalty of the law denounced against sin, but simply an expedient, devised to demonstrate God's displeasure against it." This atonement, (if that can be called an atonement which rejects imputation of guilt and its full expiation,) differs widely indeed, from the atonement defined and defended in the standards of the Reformed churches, and which, for distinction's sake, and for the want of a more appropriate designation, is denominated, the New or the Hopkinsian atonement. The system of Theology which embraces one of these views of the atonement, differs in almost all its leading articles from the other. They are almost if not altogether different gospels. You have requested your correspondents to direct your attention to such materials in



the writings of others as may conduce to the interest and usefulness of your work. Persuaded that it will benefit your readers to possess correct views of the two great prevailing systems, concerning the Nature of the atonement, we send you extracts from the writings of two defenders of these systems. These two men subscribed the same creed, and yet, hold, preach and publish, such opposite views of the atonement, that the one charges the other with holding tenets, which are impossible, unscriptural and absurd. Both are doubtless persuaded of the scripturality of their own views, but one of them must be egregiously mistaken. We extract from their works, because we understand, that the one of them is in repute among the friends of the old atonement, and the other among the friends of the New.

"This office, [of Mediator and Surety,] the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which, that he might discharge, he was made under the law, did perfectly fulfil it, endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul and most painful sufferings in his body." *Con. Faith*, p. 42, *Utica Edt.* 1822.

"The Lord Jesus Christ, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, hath fully satisfied the justice of the Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." *Ib.* p. 44.

"Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those who are thus justified, and did make proper, real and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." *Ib.* p. 55.

Let these extracts from the Confession of Faith, constituting a part of the articles subscribed by both writers, be the text, and the following extracts from their writings be their respective commentaries on this text.

"On the principle of a legal substitution and a literal infliction of the penalty of the law, the atonement would bring no accession of happiness to the universe.

The system which is now under consideration represents the Lord Jesus Christ as undertaking to make an atonement for a definite number of our race. Those persons are the elect, or those who will finally be saved. This atonement which he made for them, consisted in suffering the penalty of the law in their stead. It is not considered enough, on this plan, for him to suffer what would answer in the place of the infliction of the penalty; but he must suffer the identical curse which they deserved, and which they had incurred by their sins. The amount of Christ's sufferings must be just the same as the aggregate sufferings included in the eternal condemnation of all those who are saved by his merit. There was first a literal transfer of all their sins to Christ, which rendered him legally bound to suffer their punish-

ment, and then each and all of these sins were expiated by his enduring the original penalty which was threatened in the law.—The agonies which he suffered were equal to the endless misery of all those who will be saved by his interposition in their behalf.

To this view of the atonement we farther object, because it annihilates every particle of benevolence in the gospel. If Christ suffered the same misery in kind and degree which was due to the whole number who will be saved, and which they must have suffered, had no atonement been made, we are unable to discover that wisdom and goodness which we have ever considered prominent features in the gospel scheme. We have been in the habit of looking upon this system as the grand device of heaven for preventing misery and for increasing happiness. But if Christ suffered all that the law would inflict to eternity upon the vessels of mercy, then there is no gain on the principles of general benevolence. The same misery is endured, in the rational system, which would have been endured, had the whole race of Adam perished without the provisions of the gospel. Satan has met with no defeat. If he has not literally accomplished the ruin of the whole family of man, he has accomplished that which amounts to the same thing. He has secured a part as the victims of despair, and for those who are rescued from his grasp, he has received a full and malignant compensation. In the place of the eternal misery of each redeemed soul, he has seen the same amount of suffering inflicted on the Son of God. This is by no means such a triumph over Satan as the bible describes. This is not such a gospel as inspiration reveals. A system which prevents no misery, and which brings no accession to the happiness of the universe—a system whose grand and distinctive characteristic is that it devises a way in which the innocent may suffer a certain amount of misery which was due to the guilty, would hardly excite, as the gospel does, the wonder and admiration of the angels in heaven. Read the parable of the lost sheep, and you will learn, that the plan of redemption will increase, as it was designed to do, the happiness of the universe. Read almost any page of the New Testament, and you may infer the same truth which the apostle Paul distinctly expresses, in his Epistle to the Ephesians—that “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” learn “by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”—Beman’s Sermons, p. 42—44.

“The wisdom of this plan [viz. of a vicarious punishment] will farther appear, if we consider that thereby provision is made for a more full discovery of the glory of the Divine character, and, at the same time, for a greater accession of good to the rational creation.

Had the whole of our fallen race been left to perish, like the angels who kept not their first estate, there would have been no



room for the manifestation of God's special mercy. This attribute of Deity, which now diffuses such a glorious lustre over the Divine character, and which swells the notes of holy angels and the redeemed from among men, could have had no place in his moral administration, had satisfaction not been made for sin by the vicarious death of the Son of God in our nature. Grace reigns, but then it reigns, and only could reign, through righteousness, in the salvation of sinners.\* Mercy goes in glorious procession before God's face; but it emanates from a throne sprinkled with the blood of an atoning sacrifice. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face."† "He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."‡ In the salvation of sinners through the mediation of Christ, "Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have embraced each other."§

The beneficial results of the death of Christ to the human race, must be obvious to all who believe the doctrines of Scripture. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. The personal punishment of transgressors is utterly incompatible with their salvation. Had atonement by substitution not been devised and carried into effect, our whole family must have sunk into eternal perdition: and one species of rational beings must have been forever cut off from the society of the blessed, and consigned to the regions of endless misery and despair. But, by means of this wonderful device, God is glorified, and a great company of the human race, which no man can number, are saved with an everlasting salvation. Satan is spoild of his captives—hell of its victims, and heaven is replenished with the ransomed throng, who, associated with holy angels, serve God day and night in his temple.

But the human race do not constitute the only species of rational beings who have derived advantage from the death of Christ. He shed his blood for the redemption of men only, but the advantages resulting from his death, are not confined to the human race. We have already noticed the benefit resulting to the moral creation in general from the death of Christ, so far as it regards protection and example. By his death, and the development of the scheme of man's salvation connected with it, they have acquired more knowledge, and consequently, more intellectual enjoyment, than from the contemplation of all the other works of God. Hence the angels, as represented by the cherubim above the mercy-seat, had their eyes inward, and fixed upon that symbol of the atonement. To the same purpose we are told, that these celestial spirits desire to look or pry into

\* Rom. v. 21.

† Psal. lxxxix. 14.

‡ Job xxxiii. 24.

§ Psal. lxxxv. 10, 11.

what relates to the redemption of the church. "Which things the angels desire to look into."\* It is for this reason that they strike in, and join with the ransomed about the throne, in celebrating the praises of the Redeemer. They cannot join with them in saying, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood:"† but still they make the death of Christ the burden of their song, as it is the grand medium through which they have attained, as students of Divine mysteries, to a great proportion of their knowledge of the nature, persons, and perfections of that Godhead whom they adore. It is for the same reason that they delight in ministering to the saints on earth, and mingling in their assemblies; for in these they are constantly receiving additional discoveries of the rich mercy, and boundless wisdom of their Creator. "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."‡ From these hints, it must be evident, that through atonement for sin, by the vicarious death of the Son of God, there is at the same time a more full discovery of the glory of the Divine character, and a greater accession of good to the rational creation, than if the whole of our race had been subjected to punishment for their own sins. The plan of substitution must, therefore, be worthy of God as an infinitely good and infinitely wise Being.

Again, The equity, as well as the wisdom, of this plan, will further appear, if we consider, that no injury ultimately results to any one from its execution. No injury ultimately results to the Son of God, by whom the atonement is made. It would have been inconsistent with the justice of God, to have laid such an appointment upon his own Son, without his consent; and with his goodness, had the fulfilment of that appointment been to issue in his own ruin, or the ultimate destruction of his human nature. But none of these obstructions stood in the way of this wonderful plan, either in design or in execution. His constitution from eternity, as the Surety of the church, was not more the result of his Father's appointment, than of his own choice and undertaking. The redemption of the church, so far from being a task imposed upon him against his will, was contemplated by him in purpose with great delight. It is in relation to this appointment that He says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."§ And it is, as thus set up, that he adds, "Then I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing al-

\* 1 Pet. i. 12.

† Rev. v. 9.

‡ Eph. iii. 9, 10.

§ Prov. viii. 22, 23.



ways before him. Rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and my delights were with the sons of men,"\* This appointment was the object of his delight, not only in design, but also in execution. Hence, in the immediate prospect of entering upon the work which the Father had given him to do, He said,— "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God! Yea, thy law is within my heart.†" And when actually engaged in it, we find him declaring, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."‡

It would also have been inconsistent, not only with the justice, but also with the goodness of God, to have exacted from him the punishment of our iniquities, had it been to issue in his own ruin. But this was so far from being the case, that the work given him to do, was to redound to his honour, and to issue in the glorious exaltation of that nature in which he was to suffer. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."§ It is from the accomplishment of this arduous undertaking, in the character of a servant, as it tends to illustrate the distinct personality, and supreme Deity, as the Son of God, that He receives an eternal revenue of praise from the grateful redeemed from among men, and from the admiring angels who surround God's eternal throne. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."|| "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the four living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."¶

As no injury was done to the Son of God by his Father in the appointment to his office and work of redeeming the church, so the Son himself, in his eternal undertaking, and its accomplishment in time in our nature, did not violate any prior obligations.

\* Prov. viii. 30, 31.

† Psal. xl. 7, 8.

‡ John iv. 34.

§ Heb. ii. 9.

|| Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

¶ Rev. v. 8, 9— 11, 12.

Considered as God, he had a supreme right to engage to redeem the church. Viewed as incarnate, he accomplished his eternal undertaking by his obedience unto death, in the character of a Surety, without violating any prior obligations of his own. As man he was never under the law for himself, since his human nature never subsisted by itself, but from its first formation was united to his divine person. He obeyed the law, therefore, for others, as a Surety; without neglecting any duties, or violating any obligations that he was under for himself. Besides, he was supreme Lord of his own life; for though the Father, according to eternal compact, prepared him a body of human nature, that human nature became his own by the act of assumption; he had therefore an undoubted right to lay it down for the redemption of his people."—Stevenson's Dissertation on the Atonement.—Second Edt. p. 150—159.

(Review to be continued.)

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## Selections.

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### ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE PRESENT ENGLISH VERSION OF THE SCRIPTURES.\*

*To the Editor of the Christian Recorder.*

SIR—IN your prospectus, it is avowed as one of the chief objects of your work, and one of your most delightful employments, "to elevate the inspired volume in the esteem of your readers; and, if possible, arouse even the careless and unthinking to a serious consideration of its all-important contents." In pursuance of this grand design, allow me to occupy a few pages with an analysis of a "*Lecture on the Excellency of the present English Version of the Holy Scriptures*;" the full title of which you will find at the foot of this page. In this analysis I shall endeavour to embody the facts and reasonings of the author; and hope to succeed in furnishing your readers with a digest of historical evidence in support of the character of our most excellent version of the sacred records. It is true the work I notice is neither scarce nor expensive; but, it affords information on one of the most interesting topics on which the mind of man can be employed,—it furnishes the unlettered Christian with a host of Arguments by which he will be able to withstand the gainsayer,—it unfolds, to the Biblical student, the result of much study and research in a small compass,—and stimulates to zeal and perseverance in the prosecution of inquiries connected with the present and eternal

\* The excellency of the authorized version of the sacred scriptures defended against the Socinians: a sermon delivered at the monthly lecture, in Gloucester-street Chapel, Liverpool, on Wednesday evening, October 18, 1820, by James Lister, Minister of Lime-street Chapel.



happiness of mankind. It is from no wish to rob the worthy author of the fruit of his labours that I have undertaken the task. I flatter myself he will rejoice at the more extensive circulation of the historical facts with which he has enriched his pamphlet: and, if your work should ever attract his notice, I would urge him to publish his lecture in the form of a cheap tract, for general distribution among the ignorant and unstable, who have fallen victims to the specious reasonings, and unfounded calumnies of Unitarians and Freethinkers—a set of men who have aspersed the character of our English bible,—and thereby shaken the faith and confidence of the unlearned.

Mr. Lister has chosen for his text, Nehemiah viii. 8; “*So they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*” In the outset, the preacher states his reasons for introducing the subject to the notice of his hearers. “It must be very painful to the common people to hear the teachers in whose learning, piety and judgment they confide, insinuate that our established version gives a distorted picture of the original. In this way, much has been done, latterly, to shake the faith of men in the great doctrines of Christianity; such as the trinity, the fall of man, the depravity of human nature, the deity of Christ, the atonement, the personality, divinity, and influence of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith, the existence and agency of good and bad spirits superior to man, and the eternity of the future punishment reserved for the wicked. Great pains have been taken to point out the blemishes and faults which exist in our authorized version—as in all works merely human. Alterations and improvements have been suggested, one after another, till an impression has been made that no dependence can be placed on the established version in such places as refer to the great doctrines of Christianity. It has been gravely stated, that the prejudices of infidels are attributable to the blunders of the English version: and some have hinted, that were the sacred books fairly translated, much of the evidence which now appears in them for orthodox sentiments would be silently annihilated.” These are some of the reasons, adduced by the author, for delivering the lecture now under consideration,—and they will be held as valid and powerful arguments, not only for preaching on such a subject—but likewise for calling in the aid of the *press* to give more extensive publicity to the proceedings of the enemies as well as the friends and supporters of our most holy faith. Mr. Lister deserves well of Christians, in general, for what he has already done,—but would still merit warmer expressions of gratitude were he to adopt the hint I have suggested, that the facts he has collected may still have a wider and more extensive circulation.

In discussing the subject, the preacher has adopted the following method:—

I. Give a history of the translations which preceded, and paved the way for our version.

II. State the manner in which the version itself was accomplished.

III. Subjoin the testimonies of some of the first scholars and critics to the excellence of our version.

IV. And examine briefly the claims of the improved version.

1. Let me detail the translations which paved the way for our present one, and which the translators used as helps in their great undertaking.

The first is the Septuagint, the oldest in the world, and the ground work of all the translations which have followed. This is a translation into Greek of the Old Testament. It was made in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about two hundred and eighty years before Christ, was universally used in the Jewish synagogues, and was for three hundred years equally venerated by the Christian churches. It is called Septuagint because seventy-two interpreters are recorded to have been employed in the great work.

2. The Jewish Targums may be next mentioned. After the Babylonish captivity, the purity of the Hebrew tongue was corrupted, and neighbouring dialects prevailed among the Jews.—These Targums are paraphrases of the Hebrew text in the Chaldee; and, in many instances, both afford a clear light to the meaning of the Hebrew—and an unquestionable evidence of the ancient Jewish faith in the divinity and spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

3. The Samaritan is next in order. This is a very servile copy of the Pentateuch, and by its singular deviations from it in some texts has excited much discussion among the learned.

4. Of all modern versions, the Syriac versions stands first.—They were made, most probably, in an early part of the second century. There are two Syriac versions of the Old Testament, one made from the seventy and the other from the Hebrew original. The version of the New Testament has long been highly valued among scholars.

5. The Latin. In the first centuries, various Latin translations were made by private individuals for the western churches in Europe, as the Syriac had been made for the eastern world. But all these Latin versions were finally absorbed in the superior work of the learned Jerome, whose version altered and improved, and called the vulgate, has long been the standard text among all the subjects of the Pope. It is from the Vulgate that the authorized Catholic versions are derived.

6. In a very early age, probably the seventh, an Ethiopic version was made. This was introduced into Egypt and Africa.

7. The Coptic. Dr. Wilkins refers it to the third century.

8. The Armenian. This embraces the whole sacred scriptures, and was made from the Seventy in the fourth century.



9. There is an old Persian translation from the Seventy.— There is also a version of the Gospels nearly 500 years old.

10. The Gothic Bishop Ulphilas rendered the sacred scriptures into Gothic in the fourth century, omitting the Kings and Chronicles, lest his barbarous countrymen should read the Jewish wars. Of this truly venerable version the four gospels remain.

11. The French. The most ancient in this language is one effected by Peter de Vaux, in 1160. He was esteemed a leading man among the Waldenses. Raoul made another in 1380, In 1535 Olivetan published another French version, and in 1550, a fourth was edited at Louvain. All these French versions preceded our authorized version, and were doubtless known to the translators.

12. The Italian. In 1471, Malermi published his; and in 1532, at Venice, Brucioli produced his. Our version being begun in 1604, these Italian ones preceded it.

13. The Spanish. The oldest mentioned is in 1500. The epistles and gospels were published in Spanish by Ambrose de Montesein in 1512. The whole sacred scriptures were edited by Cassiodore de Reyna in 1569. Driander dedicated his Spanish New Testament to Charles the Fifth in 1543. Besides these modern Spanish, the Jews had Spanish versions, of a very ancient date, in use among them.

14. The German. Before the reformation by Luther, there was a version of the sacred scriptures in German, printed at Nuremberg in 1447. But the superior translation by Luther, that wonderful man, soon threw the other into the shade. The fidelity, simplicity, and energy of Luther's version afforded a fine model for our translators to copy, while it supplied them with an exact comment on the meaning of the original. Luther's version was completed in 1531.

15. A Flemish version was published at Louvain in 1544.— This was a Catholic but a good one.

16. A Danish one formed on the model of Luther's came out in 1550.

17. A Sweedish one in the same way appeared in 1534.

18. The Bohemian. Eight learned men engaged in this great undertaking, which was finished in 1539.

19. The Polish. A female, illustrious in rank, more illustrious by piety, had the honour of producing this version. Under her auspices, it came out in 1390.

20. The Slavonian or ancient Russian appeared in 1581.

You may observe how all these versions were connected, how one suggested, and prepared the way for another. Let me now direct you to the translations in our own tongue, which preceded our present version.

The venerable Bede who died in 785, translated the sacred scriptures into Saxon for the use of our rude German forefathers.

fred the Great about a century after, followed the example of Bede. In 1571, Parker of Canterbury published an old Saxon version. John Wickliff's version in 1360 is well known, and cannot be sufficiently praised, as the morning star which ushered in the bright day of the Reformation. William Tindall's is the first which has the honour of being in modern English. He finished his second copy in 1530, and published it at the price of his own blood.

The bible called *Mathew's* was printed in 1537.

Cranmer's Bible was seen in 1540 and 1562.

The *Geneva* translation made by our countrymen who were forced to reside there during the tyranny of Queen Mary, appeared in 1557 and 1560. On this version the highest encomiums have been passed by the first judges. The late Dr. Geddes gave it the loftiest character; and on this most excellent translation, our translators placed their eye in every step of their progress.

*The Bishop's.* The notes and marginal readings of the *Geneva* bible not being pleasant to the high church party, Archbishop Parker took care to have another English version commonly called the *Bishop's bible* in 1568.

Last of all, our translators had before them an English version done by the Catholics at Rheims in 1584.

The list of translations which I have now given will, I trust, be highly gratifying to every friend of the Bible Society; and will shew the very great helps which our translators had in commencing their undertaking.

II. This leads me to the second particular proposed, namely, a succinct account of our present version. King James ascended the throne in 1603. In 1604, the translation was begun. Fifty-four learned men, of the two universities were employed in it, and were divided into six classes.

Ten at Westminster translated from Genesis to I. Chronicles.

Seven at Westminster finished all the epistles of the New Testament.

Eight at Cambridge rendered the Hagiographa of the Old Testament.

Seven at Cambridge prepared the Apocrypha.

Seven at Oxford translated the prophetic books.

Eight at Oxford undertook the Gospels, Acts and Revelations.

The king prescribed certain rules to be carefully observed by the translators, of which I subjoin the following.

1. The *bishop's* bible ordinarily read in the church, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

2. The *proper* names to be retained as nearly as possible as they are vulgarly used.

3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as church, bishop, &c.



4. Where any word hath divers significations, that signification to be kept which is warranted by the most ancient fathers, which agrees with the scope of the place, and the analogy of faith.

6. No marginal notes to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew and Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution be so fitly and briefly explained in the text.

8. Every man of each company to take the same chapters, and having translated or amended them by himself, where he thinketh good, then all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their parts what shall stand.

9. As any one company hath despatched any one book in this manner they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously.

10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ on any places, to send the others word thereof, to note the places, and therewithal send their reasons: to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company at the end of the work.

11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority, to any learned man in the land for his judgment in such a place.

12. Letters to be sent by every bishop to each of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send his particular observations to the companies at Oxford or Cambridge or Westminster. C/

13. The following translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's bible.—1st, Tindal's,—2d, Matthew's,—3d, Coverdale's,—4th, Whitchurch's,—5th, the Geneva.

14. Along with the fifty-four learned men,\* three or four of the most eminent and grave of the university divines should oversee the translations and see the above rules properly observed.

When the whole was finished, three copies of it, one from Oxford, one from Cambridge, and one from Westminster, were sent to London, and two persons were chosen from the joint companies to review and polish it. These daily met in Stationers' Hall for nine months till they had completed the task assigned them. Last of all, Bilson of Winchester and Dr. Miles Smith, who from the beginning had been very active in this affair, reviewed the whole, and prefixed the arguments to the several books.

In their own preface the translators have the following words. "We had before us the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New, nor were we the first who fell in hand with

\* Forty-seven only were employed in the work of translation.

translating the Sacred Scriptures into English, and consequently destitute of former helps. The work has not been huddled up, but has cost the workmen the labour of nearly three years.— Neither did we think it tedious to consult the translators or commentators. Chaldee, Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch. Neither did we disdain to revise what we had done, and to bring back to the anvil what we had hammered," &c.

The lecturer then proceeds to the statement of two considerations, which throw a clear and steady light on the whole subject:

1. The time when our translation was completed, though two hundred years ago, was remarkable for classical and biblical learning. The classics from the capture of Constantinople, had been revised, and had been studied with enthusiastic ardour in all the countries of Europe. In the century immediately preceding our version, schools and colleges had been multiplied over all the western world. Manuscripts were explored, compared, and edited, and correct copies of the ancient authors, both profane and sacred were published with a zeal and patience far exceeding any thing observable in our times. Oriental literature, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Greek, was deeply studied; and dictionaries, concordances, polyglots, such as the world had never seen before for depth and variety of erudition, remain to this day as monuments of the talents, learning, and research of our ancestors. Exalted on these monuments, some of our puny scholars, in these latter days of great pretension, have taken their lofty stand, and affected to despise the very men by whom these monuments were reared. It is well known to the enlightened biblical scholar, that during the early part of the last century, the knowledge of Hebrew and all sacred literature was at a low ebb in this country, and that the revival of it cannot be dated back much later than fifty years. Let us beware then of putting the suggestions of modern critics on higher ground than the modest but solid claims of our ancestors.

2. To this, I add another consideration, and then I finish this part of my subject; the time when our authorized version was completed, was a time of awful contention between catholics and protestants; a contest in which whole nations were embarked to a man, arranged under their respective civil authorities.— Every nerve was strained on both sides to obtain the ascendancy. Learning, talents, piety and zeal, rushed forth to the conflict.— And the mighty field on which they met was "the translation of the sacred scriptures into the vulgar tongues."

In this fearful combat, England stood at the head of the Protestant union; and both sides were fully aware of the incalculable consequences connected with an *authorized* version of the sacred scriptures into the English tongue. The Catholics watched every measure of our government, and put every verse of our translation to the severest scrutiny. The Catholics had



already sanctioned the Vulgate, and were prepared to impugn every sentence wherein our version should differ from their authorised text. The mass of protestant learning was engaged on the one side to make our version as fair a copy as possible of the matchless originals; and the mass of popish erudition on the other, stood fully prepared to detect every mistake, and to expose without mercy every error of our public version.

Such, then, were the circumstances of the period in which our version was made; and I leave you to judge of the weight which they throw into its scale.

(*To be Concluded.*)

## Religious Intelligence.

### MISSIONS.

Whatever differences of opinion there may be among professing christians respecting the constitution of missionary societies, and the principles upon which they proceed, in sending the gospel to the dark places of the earth, we are sure that every true Christian will unite in hailing with feelings of the sincerest joy every well authenticated account of the success of the gospel sent by their instrumentality, in turning sinners to the Saviour, and in spreading abroad the glory of his salvation. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner; surely it is not wrong for saints on earth to be partakers of their joy. When the object aimed at is good, it is lawful to rejoice in the attainment of this good, though the means used for accomplishing it, may, in many points, be such as we cannot conscientiously approve. The Apostle rejoiced in that "Christ was preached," though in some instances from the most improper motives; and all such as possess the spirit of the Apostle will, with him, rejoice, in that Christ is preached, and in that a heathen is saved by whatever means this may be brought about. We know that there are many who fervently pray for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and whose exertions and contributions are liberally bestowed for this end, when they can be bestowed in a way that they approve, but who cannot believe that the principles on which some missionary societies are associated have their warrant in the word of God. They believe that the church of God in her Ecclesiastical capacity, is the only rightly constituted missionary society, and that to her, in this capacity, every missionary sent forth, ought to be amenable, and to be under her authority and direction. On this principle several efficient missionary societies are constituted, and we ourselves cannot but think, that it is the most consistent and unexceptionable. A missionary society on any other plan, possessess no ecclesiastical character, has no ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and its missionaries are under no ecclesiastical controul. Nevertheless, whatever good even such societies have been instrumental in

doing, and they have been honoured to do much—will be to us a source of unfeigned satisfaction ; and that our readers may rejoice with us, we shall endeavor to lay before them in as short space as possible, some of the great things which God has done towards the accomplishment of his promise, to give the heathen to his son, “for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.”

We have no doubt, but that one great reason why people do not take more interest than they do, in missionary efforts and intelligence, is the want of correct information about the *history and state* of missions in different places of the earth. They read a piece of missionary intelligence respecting this and the other station, but as they know nothing of the history or state of the mission, it is only intelligence about—a stranger, it fails to interest them, and is speedily forgotten. And if they should regularly read our Registers and Intelligencers, years must pass away before they pick up such a degree of acquaintance with the actual state of things, as to feel interested in them. But on the contrary, once give the people a succinct, faithful account of the history and state of any mission, they become acquainted with it, they feel interested in its success, and every piece of intelligence which may afterwards reach them, is something respecting a friend, and will be received with corresponding interest. The time is already come, in which the history of almost every missionary station has become interesting, and we are persuaded, there is no way in which the friends of missions, can more effectually promote their cause than by furnishing in as little space as possible, a simple authentic statement of their commencement, progress, and present state and prospects. To do this well, requires more space than can be afforded in such a journal as ours, and access to more documents than we have at present within our reach. That, however, our readers may not be altogether destitute of information on these matters, it is our purpose *occasionally* to furnish the best account which our means of information enable us to give, of some of the most interesting fields of missionary labour throughout the world. In the address of Mr. Ellis, from the London missionary society, delivered before the Foreign Missionary Society, at their late anniversary meeting in New-York, we have an account of the present state of the missions to the Society and Sandwich Islands, which we are sure will be read with interest by all. The whole is valuable ; the most interesting part we give towards the end of the following article :

#### BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MISSION TO THE SOCIETY ISLANDS.

[*Extracted chiefly from Brown's History of Missions.*]

The Society Islands lie south of the equator about 18 degrees, and about 65 degrees west of South America. They comprise,



as the term is commonly used, two groups, the Georgian and the Society proper. The former are five in number, containing about 10,000 souls : the number of the latter is six, containing 8 or 10,000. An account of them has long been before the public, in Capt. Cook's voyages. The general description, given by that navigator and his companions, is correct. The soil is fertile, the climate salubrious, and the scenery delightful. Those voyagers, however, were deceived in the character and situation of the inhabitants. They had neither the innocence nor the simplicity they suppose, and were far less happy. Capt. Cook did not remain a sufficient time among them, to discover their abominations. The first impressions of the missionaries were very favourable ; but fifteen years acquaintance rent away the veil, and shewed degradation. and sin, and wretchedness rarely equalled.

The London Missionary Society, instituted in September 1795, made its first efforts in behalf of these islands. In August 1796, twenty-nine missionaries, several of whom had wives, embarked at London on board the *Duff*, a vessel purchased by the society, for their own use, and commanded by Capt. J. Wilson. In March 1797, the *Duff* after a voyage of between five and six months reached Otaheite with the whole body of missionaries on board. On their arrival they were welcomed both by the chiefs and people with the greatest demonstrations of joy. Having continued till August, and seen the missionaries settled in different islands of the South Sea, Capt. Wilson returned to England with the joyful tidings of the auspicious commencement of this mission. Elated with the apparent success that had crowned their labours, before the end of December 1798, the same year on which the *Duff* returned, she was again despatched on her second voyage to the South Sea, under the command of Capt. Robson, with twenty-nine missionaries on board.\* Hitherto the missionary society had beheld its operations crowned with success beyond the expectations even of its most sanguine members. But now the sky grew dark ; the clouds began to gather ; the storm burst at once in various quarters. The *Duff* had not left England two months, when she and all the missionaries on board were captured by a French privateer, off Cape Frio, and carried to South America. After suffering many hardships, some persons who felt interested in their situation, found the means of procuring them a passage to Rio Janeiro, after a mission, from which they might if possible, proceed on their very disagreeable voyage of nearly a month, they were indulging themselves in the prospect of speedily reaching the harbor, when they were again captured by a Por-

\* Ten of the twenty-nine missionaries taken out by the *Duff*, were settled in Tongataboo, one of the Friendly Islands, and two others in St. Christina, one of the Marquesas. Some account of their success we may at a future period lay before our readers.



tuguese vessel, and carried to Lisbon. Having obtained their liberty, they lost no time in procuring a passage to England, where most of them arrived about the middle of October, after an absence of ten months.

The missionary society had scarcely recovered from the distress which the first intelligence of the capture of the *Duff* occasioned them, when they received tidings from Otaheite, of the removal of most of the missionaries from that island. Capt. Wilson had scarcely left the islands, when the conduct of the natives towards them was entirely changed. Every species of imposition was practised upon them; depredations were constantly committed, they were stripped of almost every thing they possessed, and their lives often put in jeopardy, so that the extinction of the mission was apparently inevitable. In these circumstances, after consultation was held, eleven of the missionaries with four women and four children, left the island in the ship *Nautilus*, for Botany Bay. Those that remained, continued to labor for the instruction of the natives, conducting themselves in the most cautious and prudent manner, and exposed nevertheless to the greatest hardships, vexations and dangers. Before tidings of these painful events reached England, in May 1800, twelve new missionaries sailed for Otaheite in the *Royal Admiral*, a ship laden with convicts for New South Wales. After suffering much from disease which broke out among the convicts, and having lost one of their number by death, they arrived at Otaheite, in July 1801; they were received with much affection and cordiality by their brethren, and also by some of the chiefs and people, the old king Pomarre himself, being also much disposed to befriend them. The missionaries on this island, now thirteen in number, organized themselves into a regular body, and regulations were settled for the conduct of divine worship, of their daily employments, their visits to the natives, and a variety of other circumstances.

They met with inexpressibly greater difficulties in acquiring the language than they had anticipated; but still they persevered, and omitted no favourable opportunity of disseminating among the natives some knowledge of the Christian religion. In 1803, the old king Pomarre died, and was succeeded by his son, who also befriended the missionaries, and though still without any knowledge of religion, yet his countenance and approbation was of great importance. Previous to the year 1812, no fruit of a spiritual kind seemed to reward the labours of the missionaries; for the space of fifteen years was their faith and patience tried by every kind of discouragement; they seemed to "labour in vain, and to spend their strength for nought." In 1811, Messrs. Becknell and Scott returned from Botany Bay to Otaheite, and from that time the prospects of the mission began to improve. Some appeared to be under serious religious impressions, and among these the young king Pomarre. In July

1812, he offered himself as a candidate for baptism. Extracts of letters written by him about this period, afford the most pleasing evidence of the state of his mind, and of his attainments in the knowledge of religion. He may be considered as the first fruits of the rich harvest, which has since been reaped and is now reaping in these islands; the extent and progress of which, will appear from extracts which we will now furnish from Mr. Ellis' interesting narrative of the former and present state of these islands.\*

#### THE STATE OF MORALS.

When the Missionaries first arrived among them, Mr. Ellis informs us, "the state of *Morals* was truly deplorable, and crimes of which it is a shame to speak, were almost universal, *natural affection, chastity, sincerity and justice*, seem scarcely to have had an existence in the whole community. *Treachery* was common. Brother seems to have put no confidence in brother. *Theft* took the place of industry, and was considered as a virtue.—*Drunkenness* was almost universal. Their ingenuity had furnished them with an intoxicating draught, from the juice of the *Ava*, which rendered them more like Demons than men. *Impurity* was a prevailing sin. Polygamy was common, and the duties of the marriage relation disregarded. *Infanticide*, or the murder of helpless newborn babes, was awfully prevalent, according to the best estimation that could be made, at least two thirds of the children perished by the hands of their parents.—Some, too, were sacrificed to their idols, or thrown into the sea, to propitiate the sharks and other monsters of the deep, which they worshipped as Gods. *Cruelty to parents*, was common with children, who were spared to maturity; embruing their hands in their blood, when feeble, sick or helpless, to rid themselves of the trouble of waiting upon them. And, so common was *murder* of this, and other kinds, that scarcely an instance of natural death is known among them.

"In such a state of morals, *social or domestic happiness*, did not, and could not exist. The government was absolute and was of the most cruel, capricious and sanguinary nature. The king also was chief priest. When a sacrifice was to be made, he would send to the chief of every district a number of stones, which signified that he must provide as many victims. The chief would send by night, to what huts he chose, and slay the victims to be carried to the temple the ensuing day. When the drum was heard at the temple, which was the signal for a great sacrifice, consternation would seize upon the whole people, as if it were an earthquake. No one knew but the club was to fall upon himself. Their wars were of the most bloody, and exterminating character. The vanquished, the prisoner, the sick, the

\* In Jan. 1816, Messrs. Ellis and L. E. Threlkeld; in July, Messrs. Barff and Orsmund; in Nov. Messrs. Bourne, Darling, Platt and Williams; and in June 1817, Mr. Gyles, *Cultivator*, joined the mission.



aged, the women, the children, all were slaughtered without distinction or reserve, and the most atrocious cruelties indulged in, with savage delight." Such is a brief abstract of the account of which Mr. E. gives, of the moral and social condition of this people, "and yet," adds he, (we now quote verbatim) ever this people had

### THEIR RELIGION.

They had their Gods, their altars, their sacrifices and their priests. It partook, however, of the character of the people, and of their vices. Their priests were kings and chiefs, and therefore could enforce every tenet and practice, which they wished to impose. Their religion sanctioned every crime which prevailed among them, and required the practice of it. Their *taboo* system was "horrid." It consecrated persons and places, with a sanction which they dared not incur by transgressing the rules. But the consecration was only to the service of sin and of Satan. Their idols were various, and many temples (*morais*) were erected for their worship, where human victims were offered when the priests required. The object of their sacrifices was, to avert the anger of evil deities; for they had no other, and no attribute of mercy seems to have entered into their conceptions.—The missionaries had undoubted evidence that fifteen or sixteen human beings had been presented in one sacrifice. They had evidence entitled to credit, but not so decisive, that *eighty* at one time had been offered up together. Besides idols of wood and stone, they regarded sharks as deities; and even their infant children were thrown into the sea to be devoured by them.

Such was the religion, and such the state of those miserable islanders, before the introduction of the gospel. Truly they sat in darkness, in the region and shadow of death. Probably they had been growing more vile, and more wretched for ages and generations; how long, history does not inform us. To human view, it would appear certain, that they must have become utterly extinct in a few years more, if they had not been visited by the day spring from on high. Even this afflicting account of their state is very imperfect and inadequate. But this account, though well attested, must have been almost incredible, if inspiration had not described the people where the true God is unknown, and the name of Jesus has not been announced. But whoever reads attentively the first chapter to the Romans, will see that in Paul's time pagans were sunk equally low.

### THE CHANGE.

Such was their state but fourteen years ago.—For, though the mission was established in 1797, it had no apparent success for about 15 years. No missionaries of modern times have had so great discouragements, and laboured so long without gathering the least fruit, as those who first went to the Society Islands. They were barely suffered to remain and acquire the language. Seldom could they obtain a hearing, for a sufficient time to preach a sermon, or hold connected conversation. They felt the effects of the wars which prevailed: one lost his life, others were severely injured, and most of them were compelled to withdraw. Soon they returned to one of the small islands, and began to receive a blessing. The principal king, deposed and in exile, received the gospel. He was soon after baptized, and openly espoused the cause of Christ; although the step was to human view, destructive to all his hopes of restoration to the throne. But God was with him. He regained his possessions and power, destroyed the *morais*, proclaimed the abolition of idolatry, erected churches, and encouraged his people to read and hear the gospel of Christ. These latter events occurred in 1815 and 16. In a short time the people willingly renounced their idols, sought instruction, embraced Christianity; and generally became at least a reformed and happy people. At the first dawning of the light, letters were almost



were almost unknown among them; now 12,000 can read understandingly, 3000 children are under instruction, and all the lessons in school are derived from the Scriptures. They had never erected a temple to the living God; now there are 28 houses of worship, where large congregations listen to the word of life. The number has been much larger, but is now reduced, that the people might generally hear *preaching*, rather than reading and exhortation only. Eleven churches have been formed, which now contain about 2000 communicants; and 8000 persons have been baptized. The Sabbath is almost universally observed, at least in an external manner, as a day of sacred rest. In one of the islands, it is believed that not ten families neglect family worship; not ten persons of a suitable age for the exercise, neglect to retire for secret devotion. Prayer meetings and Sabbath schools are formed, and universally encouraged; and the Lord's Supper is attended on the first Sabbath in every month. How large a number of those, who were lately so far off, are really brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, we cannot say. The deputation of the London society, who have spent much time in making minute inquiries and obtaining a personal acquaintance, are well satisfied with the state of the churches. They have said, that the great body of the communicants would be admitted into any Christian church in England. No doubt these islanders are yet depraved, and these Christians are yet imperfect. But their whole religion, national polity, social intercourse, and moral character, have undergone a surprising change. It has been produced, not by the sword of the conqueror; not by the arts and sciences; not by the introduction of civilization before the gospel, for they were still barbarous when they began to believe, not by human might or power, but by the simple preaching of the word of life.

#### THEIR PRESENT STATE.

Their *Domestic Habits* are entirely changed in many important respects. They now wear decent clothing, and have become attentive to their habitations and household affairs; more industrious in their habits, kind and benevolent in their dispositions.

Their *Government* is equitable, and divested of its cruelty and oppression. The king proposed to the people to form what may be called a constitution. Their government still has the monarchical features: but the power of the chiefs is limited, and appears to be exercised in a parental manner. Property and life are not subject to the caprice of the rulers. Courts of justice and the privilege of a trial by jury, have been introduced.

Their *Moral Habits* are almost entirely new.—The black catalogue of crimes above enumerated have disappeared. Drunkenness, formerly very general, is now extremely rare. They resist temptations to this vice, and avoid occasions which lead to it. Foreigners often try them. They have taken them on board their vessels, and urged, and almost compelled them to drink; but have very seldom succeeded. Murder and theft are more uncommon, than in countries long blest with the gospel light. Polygamy has ceased. Christian marriage has been generally introduced, and the vows of its covenant are sacredly observed. The aged, sick and infirm, receive sedulous attention from children and relatives; and benevolent societies are formed at the missionary stations, to take care of those whose connexions are poor, or whose friends are dead. Parents preserve their children, and bring them up with care. Mr. E. had seen those females who had formerly destroyed their infants, nursing and cherishing their young children, those born under gospel light, with all the fondness and solicitude of a mother's love. The Arioi society, and the taboo system, in their operation upon morals, have come to nought.—The Sabbath is religiously observed. All their food is prepared on Saturday, and no fire is kindled in their habitations on holy time. At sunrise, such as are within a convenient distance, perhaps two thirds of the people, assemble for social prayer. There are two other public meetings for preaching and religious worship as is usual with us. No labour or diversion is witnessed during the day.

*Religion*, though by no means universal, has taken deep root among them. In what portions of the United States are one tenth of the inhabitants embraced in the Christian church, and adorning their profession like the 2000 communicants on these islands? In what parts of our favoured land are the other nine-tenths of the people so much under the influence of the faith and precepts of the gospel?—Their idols are cast to the moles and the bats; their gods are burned in the fire; yea, God hath utterly abolished them. We have mentioned their family and secret devotion; their observance of the Sabbath, and attendance on public worship: the *restraining* influence at least, which the truth exerts, tends to keep them from immorality and vice, and to renovate their appearance and conduct for the present life. We have stated the opinion of the London deputation formed of the church members. And if they who have taken the covenant upon them, are indeed spiritual Christians, with what admiration and joy and gratitude must the long disheartened missionaries have welcomed them to the table of their Redeemer, and received sorcerers and idol priests as Christian teachers, and helpers in the gospel. They have around the Lord's table persons who formerly pursued the various wicked courses which we have mentioned—drunkards, thieves, robbers, assassins, adulterers, sorcerers, liars, murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, and murderers of helpless infants—those whose hand turned not back from blood in the day of battle—and those who had cut up the bodies of human victims for the altars of false Gods. They have communicants, who had formerly slain, four, five, six, seven, eight, innocent babes with their own hands. These now sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and weep while they are told of the bleeding Lamb of God. We were almost ready to exclaim, it is impossible. But the relation brought forcibly to mind the Apostle's catalogue of abandoned characters, in 1 Cor. 6, and we remembered that he adds, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Then could we believe that these also, by the grace of God, have become new creatures.

*Peace* has succeeded to their bloody wars. Pomarre, the principal king and the first convert, was obliged to defend himself against a pagan army after he embraced Christianity. He gained the victory and his enemy fled. Immediately he forbade the customary pursuit of the fugitives and left their villages unmolested. Instead of this, he sent off his troops to burn and demolish the altars of idolatry. His enemies were astonished, and enquired where has the king learnt this forbearance and mercy? It is not the custom: this was never done before in Tahiti, but it is certainly a good thing. Thus they reasoned; and the forbearance of Pomarre went far to excite inquiry concerning his new religion. Since the people at large have received the gospel, wars and fightings have ceased. The very spirit of contention and murder is gone. Occasions are named on which they have manifested a pacific spirit, which reproves those nations where the gospel of peace has long been acknowledged, but which still deliquit in war.

*Their hearts are enlarged* for the salvation of other Gentiles. *A missionary spirit* soon began to operate. Societies to promote this object are formed at every station, which manifest great anxiety for the people who are still in darkness. They have no money, and their productions for traffic are few. But they seem to do what they can. One island of 2000 souls sent cocoa-nut oil and arrow-root to London in one year, the nett avails of which were \$1800. They also sent some of their native teachers to other islands, many of which have readily received Jehovah's law. Eighteen of their number are so employed; 5000 persons on different islands are taught to read the word of God; and two churches have been formed by their instrumentality. They have expressed strong desires to see the Friendly Islands, and the Navigators', and the Marquesas, brought under the dominion of Christ, and probably would not be satisfied, till the whole abundance of the great Pacific were converted unto him.